301 All the women and girls, except the slaves, wear a sort of cotton
291 hose which is woven onto the leg itself from above the ankle to the calf of the leg. This is extremely binding, especially when new. Above the calf they bind another band of the same material, also woven onto the leg, so that the calf is bulged from both sides. At the bottom of this hose is a border or hem two or three fingers wide made of reeds, or, like most of them, of tortoise shell. When this hose is new and wet, it hurts the women. They are careful to coat it on the outside with oil and annatto so that water will not penetrate. They wet themselves as little as possible. When they embark in
481 canoes, their husbands carry them. But you would never guess how they cross streams without wetting their legs. She who has the biggest or least uncomfortable hose, or even a man who has none, takes a woman by the feet and pulls her along after him or her while the one with the tight hose follows propped against his or her behind while walking on her hands.

[57] CHAPTER V

The Foods They Eat

242 I do not think there is a nation in the rest of the world which eats less well than this one, although they have here the means to eat well. But what is the difference since they are healthy, fat, and robust without these delicacies.

● [231] They do not keep cows, sheep, goats, nor pigs, and they never eat them at home, although there are a great many pigs on Dominica; neither do they eat fowl, chicken eggs, butter, cheese, milk, oil,
[243] or fat. They salt nothing when they eat among themselves. When they visit us, they eat almost anything, although those who have children abstain, as we shall see in the next chapter. At home, they eat tortoise and white tortoise eggs, but not the yellow ones, certain
252 birds, and crabs. They never cook well what they eat, especially the crabs. They cook the birds whole, after having burned the feathers, on small sticks arranged a little above the fire. Once cooked, they wrap them in leaves and smoke them. When they are ready to eat them, they hollow them out and boil them in manioc juice with

867 The keyéye is a bird of prey that the children nourish and which
● 22/ is then killed on the children's heads at feasts. Since these birds live only on smaller birds or on fish, the young people are continually hunting or fishing in order to feed them. I have seen them raise a pelican in the following way. They let him fly out to sea after having painted his feathers red. This bird when grown up came back unfailingly each night to his accustomed place. [327]

625 Theft is a great crime among the Caribs who hate the theft as much as the thief. It is said that when they catch one they make a slash with the point of their knife on his shoulders, but I have never seen anyone with these marks. [307]

524 The tibotálle is a spongy fruit which the Caribs use as a ball to play with. [459] A ball which does not bounce is called tarácoñati, [452]

672 Each of the Caribs has a special friend in whom he places an extraordinarily great trust. This friend is termed ibaoñánale or nñignaom. This friendship is so great that it extends to the other brothers who call the friend or compere of their brother ininiboñe.

831 [303] "Taking the bark off the wood and splitting the sapwood": this is also a term of joking with a man who indulges in women. [51] Some men are fickle in love and often change mistresses. [233]

591 Those who are bound by affinity in another carbet are called coyemánocou and coyemericou, for the men follow their wives and not the wives the men, unless they are captains. Thus those who have many daughters have a greater advantage, for their sons-in-law come to live with them, clear their gardens, make their houses, and go fish-
594 ing for them. [87] As soon as a daughter is born she is destined for her maternal cousin. Then when the two are old enough and have reached a suitable maturity they celebrate marriage. When this determined time is reached the boy goes to the place or dwelling of his promised wife, but only after the parents have consented. If the girl is going to marry a captain or the son of a captain, as it sometimes happens, she is conducted by her father and mother to his dwelling. Having arrived, she carries his dinner to him on a wicker table and eats with him, sitting on the ground. They then say poulíarou lone which is to say that she is married. They have no dance, although sometimes there is a little drinking party to honor the parents when they have come, but this is very uncommon. [288] When a girl is given in marriage to

213 these into their carrying baskets. They come home loaded and give enough to each one to make a fire under his hammock during the night. [232]

247 Cotton is indispensable to the Caribs for hammocks, for stringing ornaments, and for tying the feathers on their arrows. They also use it to fasten their arrowheads made either of green wood or of the tail of the sting ray, in place of iron. It is to obtain cotton that leads them to fish at the Saints or to catch crabs at Marie-Galante, for they make clearings in those places to grow cotton. You see very few Caribs who do not always carry a small roll of cotton in their baskets. The French ships do not willingly encumber themselves with cotton because of the fear of fire and because it does not load ship well. [280]

283 The women having taken the cotton from its pod and picked out the seeds then put a headless arrowshaft into it. Then they turn the cotton, which thins like carded wool. When it breaks off they attach an end to the arrow. A woman holds the arrow in one hand and in the other holds a spindle which is as long as an arm's length or more. The thread stop is a round object made of tortoise shell and is as wide as the hand with a length of about half a foot measured from the end of the shaft. This end is placed on the ground. The spindle shaft point is pressed against the women's thigh, and she rolls it back and forth with her extended hand up and down the length of her thigh. This is how the Carib women spin thread. [114]

415 A small calabash is cut into two parts and is painted by the women. It is used as a glass or a cup. [439] They cut halves from two calabashes in such a way that one half fits inside the other and forms a box. They pass cords through it and they use them as little chests, as bags, and as knapsacks. [128] They use a big and long calabash as a pot for a drink offered to some visitor, or when a sacrifice is offered. It rests on the longest part and is open on the other side. They draw off water from the opening in this calabash using a smaller one. [198]

231 The Caribs never feed any animals except by necessity or entertainment. If they have roosters it is to wake them up in the morning. If they keep birds it is to draw out their plumes in order to adorn themselves, and they use the other kind to teach their children to fish and hunt. If they keep dogs it is to hunt pigs and agoutis. If they have chickens they would prefer to die rather than to eat them, and

223 they will not eat even a single egg. Perhaps they are no longer so disgusted by them. [290] The word for dog is chou-chou. The dogs of the Caribs in the beginning were medium sized, had upright ears like foxes, and were raised to hunt agoutis and lizards. These dogs could not stand us because of our clothes. Now the Caribs take any kind of dog they can get. [166]

224 The Caribs hunt agoutis with the same eagerness that the French hunt hares. The agouti has the head of a rat, with rough hair on his hind quarters which stands up when he is frightened. His tail is smaller and shorter than that of a rabbit. His color is brown, bordering on black. He eats sitting up like a squirrel and holds food in his front paws. When the agouti is chased by dogs, he hides in the hollow of a tree like in a fort, but the Caribs set fire at the entrance to smoke him out, and the dogs catch him when he runs out.

252 When the meat is fresh the taste is too gamy, but the flavor improves when it is kept until the next day and is salted. The Caribs prepare it by roasting and expose the meat to smoke. Then they wrap it up in leaves and keep it as long as they wish. The meat dries up like leather. Nevertheless, it softens when boiled for a long time in manioc water, and it makes good food for the Caribs who eat almost no other land animal. [430]

223 The Caribs know the trees where parrots have their nest. They go to catch them when they are downy. They cage them and then teach them how to speak and whistle. [218] The Caribs do not yet 48 use stairs, steps, or ladders. Yet they are able to climb everywhere. I have seen some grab hold on a tree with their two hands and put the soles of their feet against the tree. This requires great strength. Possibly they don't all climb in this way. [205]

226 The Caribs are watchful, but it is only to go out at night for crabs, or to shoot fish from the rocks, in order to provide for the next day. They only collect provisions for one day, so that should anyone come late, they will scarcely find a piece of cassava to give him. [297] The Caribs hunt crabs at night with torches. [367] Crabs are tied in pairs along five or six sticks. The Caribs hold them by the ends and this makes up the load of one man. [129]

When the Caribs sail along the coasts and see lobsters at the bottom of the sea they dive in from the canoe with a rock in order to go more easily to the bottom. Having seized the lobster they drop the stone and bring up their catch, sometimes getting their nose filled

5: Rouse E-4 (no date) 1948 ST13 Callinago ST13 (1650-1700)

SUBSISTENCE ACTIVITIES

226 [252] **Fishing.**—The staple food of the *Carib* was the crab, which they hunted at night by torchlight. They roasted the meat, seasoning it with a sauce called taumalin,[3] a mixture of lime juice and pounded peppers with the greenish meat next to the shell of the male crab.

Sea food was an important part of the diet. The *Carib* picked up shellfish along the shore. They caught fish with small nets (at night or when the water was calm); with hook and line (the hooks being of tortoise shell); by scattering a certain kind of poisonous wood on the water; or by use of the bow and arrow. The arrows were long and three-pronged; each was attached by a string to a wooden float so that it could easily be retrieved. Harpoons (with separate points) were employed to catch the manatee and sea turtle; the land turtle was stalked. Corrals are mentioned; they may have been fish wiers.

224 **Hunting.**—On land the *Carib* hunted the agouti and the lizard with dogs, smoking the lizards out of the holes into which the dogs drove them. They also caught birds, using the bow and arrows tipped with cotton or else stupefying the birds with smoke from a poisonous wood.

231 **Domesticated animals.**—Parrots and dogs were the only domesticated animals except when, in historic times, the people kept poultry and swine, largely for trade with the Europeans.

252 **Preparation of fish and meat.**—The *Carib* took special pains in the preparation of fish and meat, broiling them sometimes for a whole day over a slow fire on a wooden grid 2 feet (0.6 m.) high. They also roasted fish and agouti meat in the ash and smoked the latter for purposes of storage, cooking the smoked meat in cassava juice when they wished to eat it. For the seasoning of fish and meat they used a sauce called coüi, which was made by boiling the juice of the manioc with crushed peppers, lime juice, and manioc flour. They made a soup from left-over scraps of fish and meat, as well as from agouti bones. These were boiled in manioc juice with peppers, manioc flour, and oysters to form a strong mixture in which the Indians dipped cassava bread. Apparently this was as close as the *Carib* came to the typical *Arawak* pepper pot.

262 The same sources that describe the foregoing methods of hunting, fishing, and preparing meat also mention a taboo on the manatee, the turtle, and all land animals. The sources imply that this taboo was general, a fact difficult to reconcile with the above statements.[4] It is certain, however, that the *Carib* never took salt or ate the flesh of the eel and that they avoided fat.

241 **Farming and preparation of agricultural foods.**—The Indians cultivated both the bitter and the sweet varieties of manioc, using the same

[3] All *Carib* terms cited here are from the men's language.

[4] This discrepancy may represent a difference between ideal and practice or it may reflect a breaking down of the system of taboos. There is some indication that the taboos were followed only during a limited period, as after feats. (See p. 557.)

6: Taylor E-5 (1930-1937) 1938
ST13 Callinago ST13

stumps. Partly as a protection against the depredations of domestic animals (hens, pigs, goats, cows) and partly because, under primitive methods of culture, the ground becomes exhausted and a new garden must be made every 2 or 3 years, the provision grounds are for the most part situated beyond the coastal hill crest on the slopes of the Pegoua Valley, some miles distant from the homes of their owners. Practically the only implements of culture used today are the cutlass (machete) and the digging stick—a strong, sharp-pointed stick popularly known as "lochette" (Carib: koyéré).

Manioc (*Manihot utilissima*) still forms the principal crop, although its importance as a staple diet has diminished in the last half century. Several varieties are known and distinguished by the following local appellations: manioc noir (the commonest), m. blanc, m. violet, m. bleu, m. beurre, m. 100 livres, m. doux, camanioc. The last two are nonpoisonous and may be eaten as vegetables. Manioc is planted by cuttings—usually by groups of three to one pit—and takes from 1 year to 18 months to reach maturity. The process of farine and cassava making is described elsewhere.

Next to manioc, the most important tubers cultivated are: chou (*Xantosoma saggitifolium* Sch., malanga, tannia, taya) of various species, varieties of yam (*Dioscorea alata, pilosiuscula, multiflora, Cayennensis, trifida, tuberosa*—blanc and de l'eau, bâtard, marron, à piquants noirs, couch-couche, yam bonda, etc.), of sweet potato (red, yellow, white), of *Maranta* (red, white), *Solanum*, and *Cipura*. Squash and Indian corn are also grown, but do not form a staple food, as with the Indians of central and southern North America. The latter is never ground into flour, but is roasted and eaten whole, rather after the manner of a delicacy or sweetmeat. Bananas, plantains, and breadfruit (*Artocarpus*) of the ordinary and of the "chestnut" (*seminifera*) varieties are grown and eaten extensively. Various fruit trees and other utilitarian trees and bushes are cultivated around and near the houses. Such are: cotton,[1] coffee, cocoa, palma Christi or castor-oil plant, roucou (*Bixa orellana*), calabash (*Crescentia cujete*), guava, mango, sugarcane, papaya, various species of *anona* (*muricata, reticulata, squamosa*—corossol, cachiman, pomme canelle, etc.), and la pitte or silk grass (*Bromelia* sp.) for the making of twine and fishing lines, *Phyllanthus conami* or "nivrage" for fish poisoning, Malvinia or "soap bush," sapodilla, and pineapples (of which several small species grow wild in the woods).

The clearing of the land is done by the men, the rest of the work (planting, weeding, digging, and gathering) being divided among both sexes largely according to individual taste or family arrangement.

[1] Two varieties—so-called black and white, according to boil-room color. The former is esteemed better.

415 blacks and European creoles still use it today, not only in Dominica,
285 but also in Guadeloupe and in Martinique. The Caribs, as a matter
[439] of fact, make these baskets not only for their own use, but they also sell them in order to obtain articles which they need, knives, hatchets, pieces of cloth, alcohol, etc. The Caribs formerly used the matatou, a kind of square coverless basket, supported by four feet, and the
[442] catoli, a kind of hod used by the women to carry potatoes, bananas, fish, and other food products to the hut.

262 The diet of the Caribs is however not complex; it is almost ex-
824 clusively vegetable, and is supplemented from time to time by a few crabs or by fish. The plants they eat are cultivated by them or are gathered in the forest. The most important are the yam, Dioscorea sativa, the sweet potato, Convolvulus batatas, the Caribbean cabbage, Colocasia esculenta or Xanthosoma sagittaefolia, and finally the cassava, Manihot dulcis and Manihot edulis, from whose roots they extract farina with the aid of a very primitive press and which is used by them in making the cassava, a kind of baked pancake which formerly took the place of bread in all the Antilles. The trees which supply them with fruits are numerous: these are the mango-trees, the guava-trees, the coeo-nut trees, the banana trees, and the famous bread-fruit tree, Artocarpus (1) incisa, imported from Asia and Polynesia but

1. From ἄρτος, bread and καρπός, fruit.

long since acclimated in the Antilles. The forest supplies them with
[439] another article of exchange, a tree, (called the "Bay tree" by the English) whose leaves they gather, which are taken to Roseau and thence sent to Europe or the United States, where an essence is extracted for use in perfume-making.

262 Meat is an unimportant part of their diet and the few animals
[23] they raise; pigs of Spanish or /139/ French origin, and domestic
439 poultry, hens and ducks serve more as articles of exchange than as
266 food. Even formerly when they did not object to human flesh, it seems that they used it only rarely; when following a war they had massacred a large number of enemies, they thought it only fitting to eat them. Furthermore, Father Labat is full of indulgence towards them on this point, and although they had once offered him the smoked arm of an Englishman, probably the remains of a feast, he finds it hard to apply to them the epithet of cannibals.

13: Hodge & Taylor N, E-5 (1930-1956) 1957
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the chief native foodstuffs. They are usually boiled, rarely roasted, but in either case always in the green condition (unripe). The « popote » (i. e. the inflorescence bud) of this species or of the banana is crushed and its juice is applied as a cure for ulcers. Like those of the balisiers (*Heliconia* spp.) the leaves of both plantains and bananas are much used as wrapping material.

Specimen citation: no herbarium material collected.

Musa paradisiaca Linnaeus subsp. **sapientum** (Linnaeus) O. Kuntze, Rev. Gen. 2: 892. 1891.

Banana. — Figue. — *baküku*.

The distribution of the banana is identical with that of the plantain.

Bananas are hardly as important as plantains in the Caribs' diet, but they are an important commercial export crop in Dominica. A drink was formerly made from the fruit but today it is generally eaten ripe out of hand.

Specimen citation: no herbarium material collected.

ZINGIBERACEAE. Ginger Family.

Aframomum granum-paradisi (Hooker) K. Schumann in Engler, Pflanzenreich 20: 213. 1904.

Grains-of-Paradise Amomum. — Poivre Guinée.

This African plant was originally described from Sierra Leone. Various species of this fragrant-leaved genus have pungent seeds which, in the Middle Ages, were a popular substitute for pepper. Today they are still used medicinally and as a flavoring agent (22).

Caribs frequently cultivate poivre guinée near their dwellings for they utilize the seeds as a spice. The leaves, considered to be a charm, are rubbed on the body when bathing and are constituents of a ritual bath (described under *Ocimum micranthum*) for unlucky canoes. A similar bath is given to their hunting dogs. A tea is made from the leaves for stomach ache and the seeds are put into rum as a « chauffe » to excite dogs.

Specimen citation: 121 (T), 3204.

13: Hodge & Taylor N. E-5 (1930-1956) 1957
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dients in ritual baths. A ritual bath given to those suffering [789] from colds utilizes as ingredients the leaves of species of this genus plus those of three other unidentified plants, pomme coolie, [755] baksa, and fougère rouge (the latter apparently a fern). Hunting dogs are similarly rubbed when bathed in order to make them [231] « good » at the chase. For a further use of this species see *Ipomoea pes-caprae* and *Ocimum micranthum*.

Specimen citation: 27 (T), 110 (T), 426, 3252, 3257.

Pothomorphe peltata (Linnaeus) Miquel, Comm. Phyt. 37. 1840. Monkey's Hand. — Mal Tête.

A large herb of the American tropics, found in Dominica in damp places at lower and middle elevations.

The large suborbicular leaves of mal tête are heated by the [278] Caribs and applied to the head as a cure for headache.

Specimen citation: 144 (T), 427.

MORACEAE. Mulberry Family.

Cecropia peltata Linnaeus, Syst. Nat. ed. 10 1286. 1759. Trumpet-Tree, Trumpet-Wood (8). — Bois Canon.

A species of the West Indies and northern South America, to be found generally in moist forests and ravines at middle elevations.

The Island Caribs often fashion the trunks of bois canon into [501] light catamarans, known locally as « piperie ». The pounded [278] « heart » (the unopened leaves in their stipular sheaths), mixed with salt, is applied as a poultice to wounds and sores.

Specimen citation: 125 (T), 632, 3168, 3663.

Ficus spp.

Figuier. — *kudsi*.

A large tropical genus of trees including the widely cultivated fig. At least half a dozen species, certain of them large trees, occur in Dominica.

The larger spreading species of figuier (including *F. urbaniana* [776] Warb.) are considered by the Caribs to be the homes of the

13: Hodge & Taylor N, E-5 (1930-1956) 1957
ST13 Callinago ST13

The kidney bean was known and grown by the Island Caribs under its aboriginal name. Although still grown today Caribs believe that the species must not be handled by hunter or fisherman (as this would spoil his catch), nor can plants be given to domestic animals (e. g. pigs) as this would cause them to become vicious.

Specimen citation: no herbarium material collected.

Pithecellobium jupunba (Willdenow) Urban, Symb. Ant. 2: 257. 1900.

Pithecellobium trapezifolium Bentham, Hook. Journ. Bot. 2: 142. 1840.

Pithecellobium micradenium Bentham, Hook. Lond. Journ. 3: 217. 1844.

Bois Cicerou, (Bois) Pipiri, Bois Savonette [28]. — ***alukálua, narukálua*** (« white-flecked »?).

A common tree of moist forests at middle elevations in the Lesser Antilles from Guadeloupe to Trinidad, and in northern South America from Colombia to Brazil.

Caribs utilize the wood of bois cicerou for boards. A decoction of the bark is drunk for dysentery while pounded bits of bark are sometimes employed as a substitute fish poison. When rubbed in water the leaflets emit a lather which is used as a soap.

Specimen citation: 3137, 3412.

SIMAROUBACEAE. Quassia Family.

Picramnia pentandra Swartz, Fl. Ind. Occ. 220. 1797.

Picramnia antidesmoides Grisebach, Fl. Br. W. I. 141. 1859. Bitter-Bush (8). — Tan, Bois Tan [29].

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[28] The name bois savonette is seldom used on the island for *Pithecellobium*, and in the Carib Reserve by only a few of the Indians. Species of *Lonchocarpus* or *Sapindus* more frequently go under this appelation. *Pithecellobium* has probably received this name through transfer since the genus is the source of a fish poison, used as a substitute for that obtained from species of *Lonchocarpus*.

[29] Not to be confused with another tree also called bois tan (*Byrsonima spicata*).

13: Hodge & Taylor N, E-5 (1930-1956) 1957
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Fig. 29

Fig. 30

[252]

Fig. 31

Fig. 32

Dominica Carib plants. — Fig. 29 – A kitchen mortar and pestle in use at Salybia. The mortar is gommier and the pestle is made of bois d'inde (*Pimenta*). — Fig. 30 – A trough or « canoe » made of gommier wood for holding grated cassava roots (*Manihot*). — Fig. 31 – Making cassava cakes on a griddle. — Fig. 32 – Flowering twigs and foliage of the mombin, *Spondias mombin*, a tree supplying an edible, date-sized, acid fruit utilized in several ways by the Island Carib.

[Opposite p. 579]